

The President famously said that he had bigger fish to fry than trying to prevent Washington and Colorado from implementing what their voters have approved. Just this last week, we had more approvals from the State of Alaska, the District of Columbia, and in my home State of Oregon. Marijuana got more votes in Oregon than anybody on the Oregon ballot.

While States are still influencing the reform, we need to bring Federal policies out of the Dark Ages. We need to be able to harness the therapeutic power of marijuana. We shouldn't force, for example, families to have to move to another State to be able to get relief for their children who suffer from torturous, violent epileptic seizures, simply because they live in a nonmedical marijuana State when medical marijuana has proven to be one of the few areas of relief for these children.

While the States are moving in this direction, the public is moving in this direction, it is not too late for Congress to move with these small steps that will make a difference.

We should start with our veterans, to give them access to their doctors, to understand what this tool is, to see if it can provide relief for them as it has done for hundreds of thousands of other people, especially veterans with chronic pain and PTSD.

Make no mistake, this is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue; it is a veterans' issue. It is allowing the public to be able to take advantage of the proven therapeutic value, as over a million Americans are able to do today.

It is past time the Federal Government makes its policies consistent in the States in which our veterans reside. Give them this right, allow them access to the therapy, give them access to their own doctors.

Here is an opportunity for Congress to catch up with the voters, to catch up with the developments in therapy, catch up with veterans' advocates, and do something far less risky and more beneficial than what is too often inflicted upon them.

States have been showing leadership on marijuana reform and hemp legislation. Now is the chance for Congress to make progress, especially for our veterans.

#### INTRODUCING THE PATIENT FREEDOM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, once again, the President's health care plan, known to the Nation as ObamaCare, is in the news, both because it is open season for individuals to choose their level of health care coverage, but also because of the now-made-public suggestion by a senior architect of ObamaCare that the administration would have to rely on, in his words, the "stupidity" of the American people to get the President's plan enacted.

Those are shameful words that disrespect every American and have rightfully been condemned by Members on both sides of the aisle. I think the American people know exactly what is in the bill.

We are reminded of it every day that we now live in a country where our government will fine you—fine you—for not having the health care coverage that it deems adequate. It is called the individual mandate, and it is a classic government-knows-best ruse, but this time with the threat of fines and penalties on individuals who don't comply or, in the interpretation of the Supreme Court, with new taxes just for you.

These fines will steadily increase each year. By 2016, it is estimated that 6 million Americans will be subjected to individual fines from their government.

I take a very different view than many in the current administration. First, I think the American people are smart enough to make health care coverage choices for themselves. Second, I don't believe our government should be mandating on individuals the health care coverage that is right for them and their family, particularly under the threat of penalties and fines and additional taxes.

That is why this week I have introduced legislation to rescind the individual mandate in ObamaCare as though it never happened. Unlike the 906-page bill that was ObamaCare, this bill, the Patient Freedom Act, is merely two pages. Every Member of this body can know what is in this bill before we pass it.

Many of us believe that a full repeal of ObamaCare is appropriate and right for the country, but it is foolish for us to think that the President will sign a repeal of his signature legislative achievement. That is why my bill covers only one provision, the individual mandate.

Let's have a government that, again, trusts the people to make their own discussions, that does not suggest, in the terms of this now-famous adviser to the administration, that the American people are too "stupid" to make their own health care coverage choices. Let's empower people with true patient freedom, true health care coverage choice.

This modest compromise is very simple. It says to the American people, "If you like your ObamaCare, you can keep it, but if you believe that you should have different coverage, you are empowered, you are entrusted, you have complete control over the health care coverage discussions for you and your family."

We are entering a period in January when compromise will be required for this Congress and this President to work together. This is a simple two-page bill that says the American people are indeed smart enough to make their own health care decisions for themselves.

I urge my colleagues to consider this commonsense bill. Let's put it on the President's desk and ask him to do what is right for the American people.

#### PRESIDENT TRUMAN USED EXECUTIVE ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, last week, we celebrated Veterans Day, so naturally, there was a lot of talk about the military, but there was also a lot of talk about President Obama taking executive action on immigration. It got me thinking about Harry Truman.

Like me, Harry Truman was from the Midwest and a plain talker who didn't mince words and sometimes made his fellow Democrats uncomfortable. Like every Republican and Democratic President in modern history, including this current one, Harry Truman was not afraid to use his executive power to fight for justice in the United States, even when Congress failed to act.

In 1946, we had just defeated fascism. We were already locked in a cold war. Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American troops had helped deliver that victory against fascism, but when the war was over, they faced the same segregation, discrimination, Jim Crow, and violence that they had before they were deployed, markers of an era from which we continue to feel the lasting effects to this very day.

In response, Truman established a Committee on Civil Rights. One concrete step the President wanted to take was to desegregate the military, but President Truman knew that legislation mandating desegregation would not pass through the U.S. Congress, which was dominated by Southern segregationists who, it is worth remembering, were mostly just like Truman, Democrats.

But he pushed forward, and Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948. The last all-Black unit in the United States military was finally abolished years later. Congress caught up with reality and with the President, but it took many years.

I am fairly confident that Democrats from North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, and Louisiana asked Harry Truman not to do a thing, but he did it anyway. I would venture to guess that there aren't too many Members of Congress today who wish that Truman did not desegregate the military or had waited however long it took for Congress to evolve on the issue of segregation. He used his pen, and we celebrate his courage today.

Here is one big difference between what Truman did and what President Obama is considering: President Truman never, ever asked Congress for legislation to desegregate the military, but President Obama, as he contemplates taking executive actions to keep families together and spare certain immigrants from deportation,